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CELEBRATING THE TRADITION

The Victorian Christmas Booklet

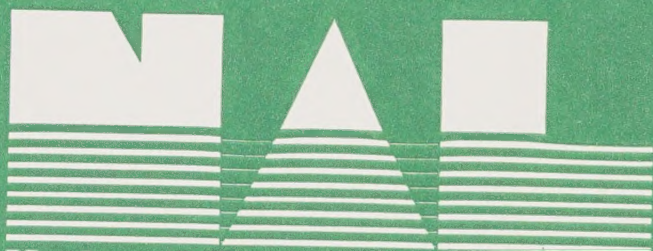


FRONT RANGE CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM

USDA Forest Service • Rocky Mountain Region



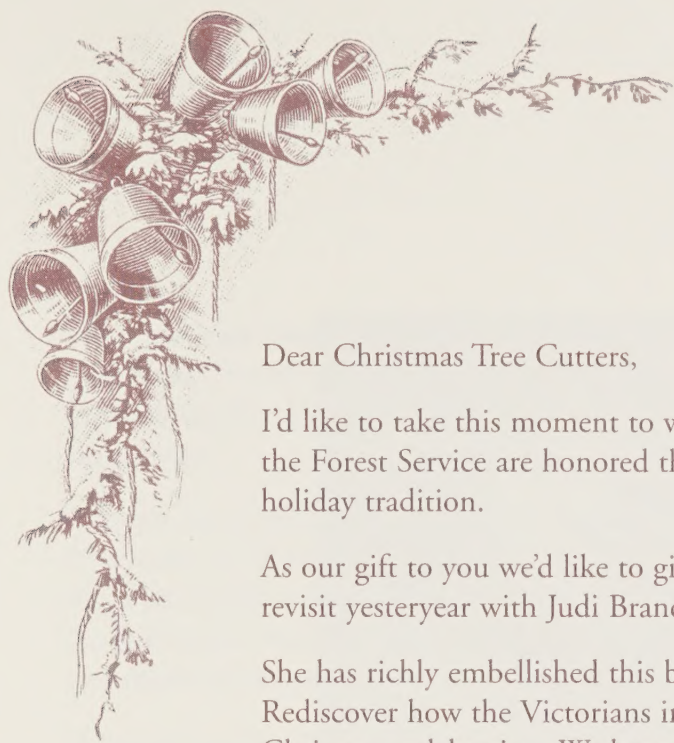
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Dear Christmas Tree Cutters,

I'd like to take this moment to wish you and your family a very merry holiday season. We at the Forest Service are honored that you have allowed us to be a part of your family's special holiday tradition.

As our gift to you we'd like to give you this Victorian Christmas booklet. We invite you to revisit yesteryear with Judi Brandow, *Visits with a Victorian Lady*®, as your guide.

She has richly embellished this booklet with bygone traditions, folklore, crafts and recipes. Rediscover how the Victorians incorporated many forest natural resources into their Christmas celebration. We hope that you'll enjoy reading and perhaps engaging in some of these past traditions.

We owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Americans of the Victorian era. Never before in the course of world history did a nation set aside large tracts of land for public ownership and welfare. It was their concern over the vast destruction of our nation's natural resources that created the first national conservation movement of our country. During this time, national forest reserves (which later became national forests) and the Forest Service were created, spearheaded by early conservationists, President Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service. Their vision was to set aside these lands for the sustainable yield of wood, water and minerals, and also to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Today you and I are still benefiting from their commitment to that vision. In 2005 the USDA Forest Service will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and we would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Victorians and their Christmas customs.

I hope your time in the national forest this season will be safe and enjoyable.

With warmest holiday wishes,

Rick D. Cables

Rick D. Cables
Regional Forester



THE LITTLE BOY

WHO

WAS



INTRODUCTION



What are your family Christmas traditions? Where did they originate? Have some of them lost their significance for you through the years? Are you perhaps struggling with the commercialization or intensity surrounding the yuletide season these days, sounding just a bit like Dickens' Scrooge as Christmas approaches?

Did you know that when Charles Dickens took up his pen to write "A Christmas Carol" in 1843, Christmas in Victorian England had lost much of its joyful significance? In fact, it had become such a drunken revelry over the previous centuries that the celebration of Christmas was one of the first things banned by the Puritans when they came to the colonies in America. As a result, Christmas in our land had lost much of its meaning as well.

What was it that brought about such a change in the perspective on Christmas that by the turn of the twentieth century, one could read:

"Merry Christmas at home, the happiest time of all the year.

The clasp that binds the twelve months and fastens them with a
golden key is Christmas, a day which never loses its power to charm
the world; the day all children love..."

The Art of Home-Making, 1898

The change in perspective came about in part when individuals and families responded to Dickens' story. When he visited America in 1867 and again in 1868, he read "A Christmas Carol" to enthralled audiences. Therein they rediscovered some of the joyful traditions of the past and the significance they held.

In our own day and age, tucked away in attics across the land, are forgotten bits and pieces of family Christmas traditions. Let's open the trunk in the attic and pull out Great-great grandmother's Christmas scrapbook and its treasure-trove of Victorian Christmastide...

Wherever you see this symbol, step back in time with Great-great Grandmother.



Wherever you see this symbol, learn fascinating tips from the USDA Forest Service.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE



"There it stands in all its wonderful array of glittering finery, shedding a softly radiant light from innumerable wax tapers upon the upturned faces of its old and young beholders. By its beneficent luminosity can be seen the most astonishing conglomeration of articles ever beheld at any on gathering."

Christmas in Heart and Home, 1901



One of the most eagerly awaited presents of Christmastide is the Christmas tree. Legend says that the first Christmas trees appeared in Germany and were decorated with apples, nuts, dates, and pretzels. On Christmas morning the children would awaken to discover the wonderfully laden tree. When granted permission by Mama or Papa, they shook the tree, scurrying to keep whatever fell to the ground.

The Christmas tree became the fashion for

Christmas celebrations throughout England and America after an etching was circulated in 1848 showing Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, her German-born husband, enjoying their Christmas tree with their children in Windsor Castle.

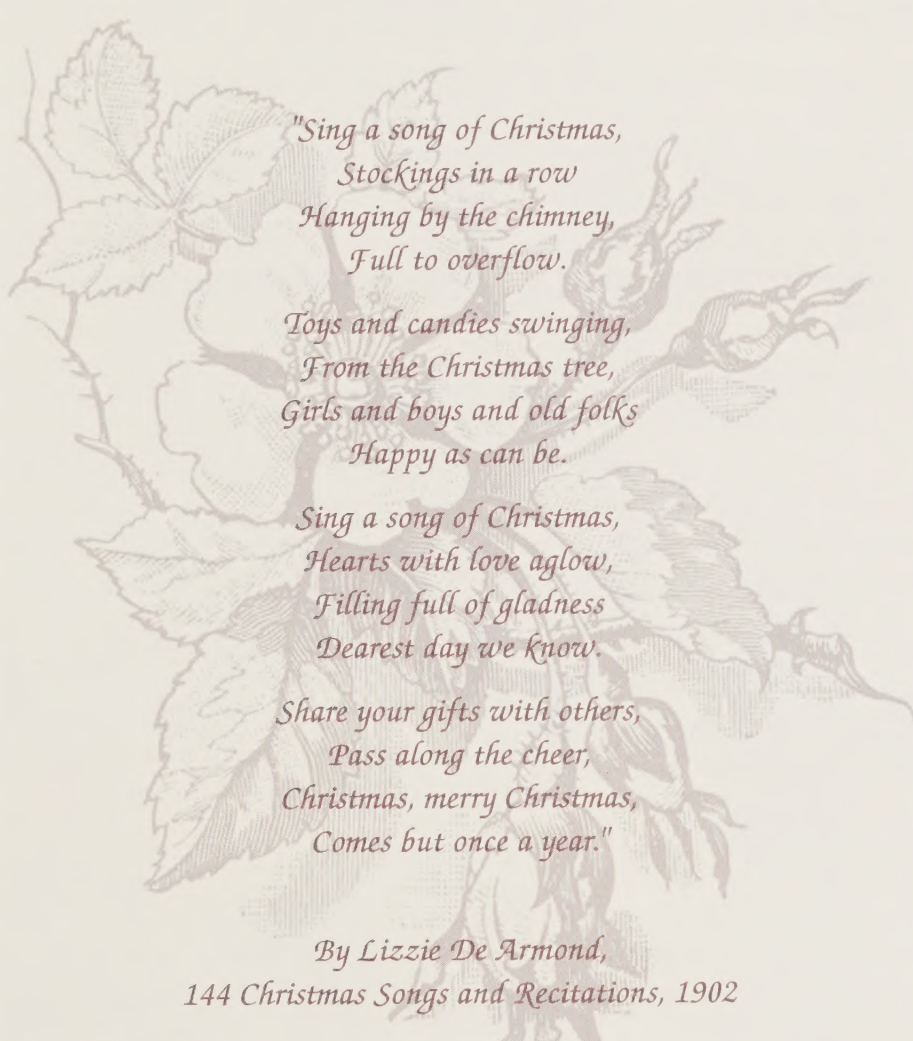
Christmas trees are still considered one of Christmastide's best gifts. Children are made to wait behind closed doors for their first glimpse of the tree on either Christmas Eve or Christmas morn while the grownups stoke the fires in the parlor and light the tiny wax tapers on the branches. Father stands watch with a wet rag wrapped on the end of a broomstick in order to quickly douse any stray sparks that might threaten to spoil Christmas, while Mother flings open the parlor doors for the children's first glimpse of the wondrous sight.

Festooned with gilded nuts or pinecones, popcorn chains, candy canes, ginger cookies, fragile egg-shell baskets filled with barley sugar or molasses candy, decorated paper cornucopias holding marzipan fruits and sugarplums, it is a glorious sight to behold (*Instructions and recipes beginning on page 24*).



It doesn't take the children long to eagerly hunt for the glass pickle ornament earlier hidden by the parents while decorating the tree. The child who finds the tiny green object will receive a special present.

Once in a great while, one of nature's decorations can also be discovered while searching the branches. The children always keep a close watch for a bird's nest. That most special decoration is an omen of good fortune! Of course, it is easy to get distracted from the hunt for either the pickle or the bird's nest as the children also begin to discover the presents suspended among the branches for them: china-head dolls, little toy drums, picture books, musical tops and more!



*"Sing a song of Christmas,
Stockings in a row
Hanging by the chimney,
Full to overflow.*

*Toys and candies swinging,
From the Christmas tree,
Girls and boys and old folks
Happy as can be.*

*Sing a song of Christmas,
Hearts with love aglow,
Filling full of gladness
Dearest day we know.*

*Share your gifts with others,
Pass along the cheer,
Christmas, merry Christmas,
Comes but once a year."*

*By Lizzie De Armond,
144 Christmas Songs and Recitations, 1902*

One nest you might
find is the
hummingbird – it's the
size and shape of
halves of a walnut
shell. What other
kinds of nests might
be in this forest?
Don't forget about
cavity nesters!



CUTTING TREES IN THE NATIONAL FOREST



THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND GIFFORD PINCHOT CHRISTMAS TREE STORY

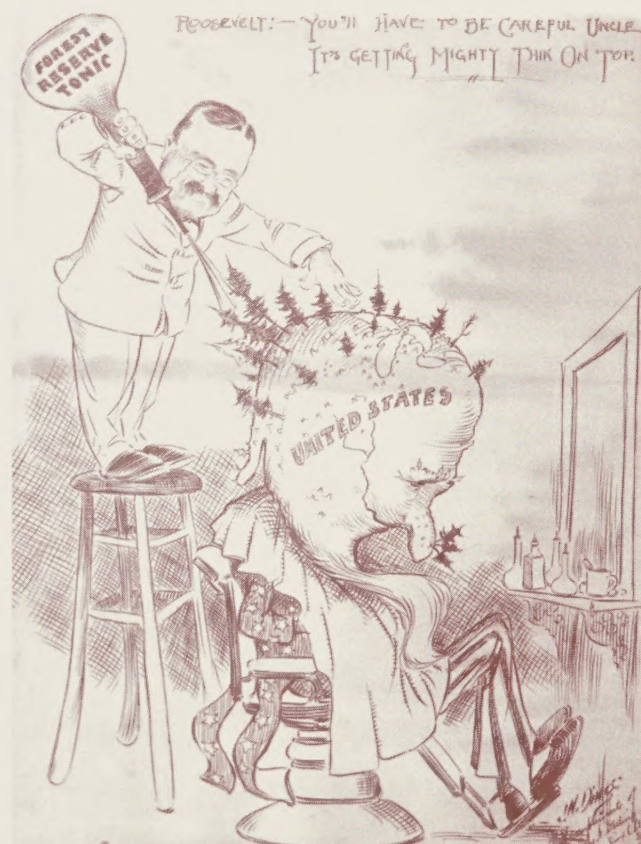


By 1901, when Theodore Roosevelt was the President of the United States, there was a tremendous amount of alarm among naturalists and conservationists regarding the indiscriminate cutting of evergreens for Christmas trees. When the press asked Roosevelt if he was going to continue with the traditional White House Christmas tree he responded with a resounding “no”. He believed that the rate at which trees were being cut for Christmas would destroy what was left of America’s forests.

However, his sons Archie and Quentin didn’t agree with their father and secretly smuggled a tree into a closet in Archie’s room. When Roosevelt found out about the tree on Christmas day he was embarrassed. After lecturing the boys he sent them to see his friend and cabinet member, Gifford Pinchot (who later became the first Chief of the Forest Service). To Roosevelt’s surprise Pinchot told the boys that cutting a Christmas tree, if done right, was actually good for the forest. Pinchot believed it was forest fires and not Christmas tree cutters that were the real threat.

After that Roosevelt continued with the official policy of no Presidential tree – but secretly allowed Archie to put up a small tree in his own room.

(At the turn of the 20th century, there had been massive deforestation. It was for this reason the national forest reserves were established in 1891 and later became national forests in 1905. Today, at the turn of the 21st century, we now have too many trees. Research indicates that prior to European settlement, ponderosa pine forests had an average of 40–50 trees per acre. Today these same forests have 400–500 trees per acre. The excessive build-up is largely a result of fire suppression and the cause for large catastrophic wildfires).



FIRE MANAGEMENT



In 1871, a forest fire in Peshtigo, Wisconsin burned the entire town down within 1 hour, damaged 16 other towns, and killed 1,200 people. The fire burned a total of 1.2 million acres and is still considered to be the worst fire disaster in U.S. history. Then, in 1910, the "Big Blow Up" of Idaho happened. It consumed 3 million acres and killed 85 people. The combination of these two fires put in place a suppression policy that lasted until 2001.

In 2000, the results of nearly a century of fire suppression were revealed in one of the worst catastrophic wildfire seasons on record. Forest Service researchers and natural resource managers have known for decades that fire is a necessary part of any healthy ecosystem. They have been slowly reintroducing it into the ecosystem through controlled prescribed burns. The goal is not to eliminate wildfire but to control the intensity by which it burns.

As a result of the 2000 fire season, a new fire policy has been implemented – one that focuses on the amount of fuel available for fire. The goal is to reduce the risk of high intensity fires by removing “ladder fuels” (that allow fires on the ground to easily move into the tree tops or “crowns”) and opening up the forest canopy. This will be accomplished by commercial and non-commercial thinnings followed by prescribed fire. Larger trees with thicker bark that can withstand surface fires will be retained.

By cutting a Christmas tree you are helping to remove the smaller diameter fuels. This helps improve the survivability of the forest during a wildfire by reducing the fuel load and opening up the canopy to help prevent crown fires.



TREE IDENTIFICATION

Here is a simple way to identify different types of evergreens:

- *Pine needles* come in bundles – 1-5 depending on the species.



- *Fir needles* are flat and friendly – soft to the touch.



- *Spruce needles* are square – you can roll them between your fingers and they are prickly to touch.



Common Evergreens used as Christmas trees in the Rocky Mountain Region include:

Douglas-fir – look for their cone – they have fringe between the brackets of the cone. Some folks will tell you these are the hindquarters of mice trying to scurry into the cone.

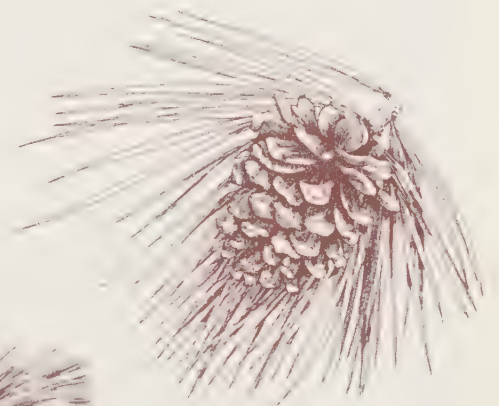
Ponderosa pine – smell their bark – some say it smells like strawberry, butterscotch or vanilla. What do you think it smells like?

Lodgepole pine – many Plains Indian tribes used the trunks of these trees for their teepee poles. That is how it got the name lodgepole.

Limber pine – these trees are very limber – try bending back one of the branches.



Douglas-fir



Ponderosa pine



Lodgepole pine



Limber pine



CUTTING, CARING FOR, AND RECYCLING YOUR TREE

Cut:

- In selecting your tree, generally choose one around 6 inches in diameter. This will help insure you don't cut one that is too large for your home.
- Cut the tree 6 inches or less from the ground.
- Take the whole tree with you. You will find that you can use every part of the tree to decorate your home and you will be doing the forest a favor by removing limbs and needles that may spark or intensify a forest fire.

Care:

Once you get home with your tree, cut off the bottom one inch and place the tree in a large bucket of warm water for about one hour. Then go ahead and bring it in to your home and set it up. The tree will need a lot of water – choose a stand that holds at least one gallon of water and remember to water it every day and not let its reservoir run dry.

Place the tree in a location that is safe and will help prevent it from drying out – in a corner is good. Keeping the tree away from heat sources such as hot air ducts, wood stoves, fireplaces, TVs, and baseboard heaters, will help to preserve its freshness and lessen fire danger.

Check all Christmas tree lights for worn electrical cords. Use UL-approved electrical decoration and cords. Turn-off tree lights at night and when you leave home.

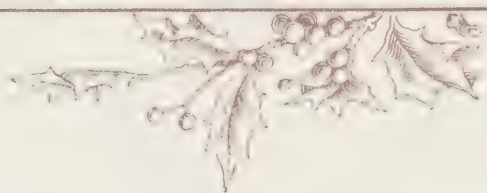
Recycle:

Once Christmas is over, recycle your tree. Many communities offer a recycling program where they will pick up the tree and mulch it.

Place the tree in your backyard, stale cookies, popcorn balls, cranberry strings and all. The birds will love you for it, especially if you beef up the pickings by adding a few suet balls.

You might also contact local farmers with ponds or your state wildlife office to see if they can use the tree to provide fish habitat.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S VICTORIAN CHRISTMASTIDE



Christmas is not just a day, but a whole season filled with joy! It begins in November when the family gathers for Thanksgiving and plans are made in earnest for the season to come. There are special times ahead! Amidst all the baking, cooking, gift making, and decking of the house, the family enjoys many smaller celebrations during Christmastide. In the 1800s, those who choose to follow the Christian religious heritage throughout the Christmas season, include celebrations that follow the cycle of worship within the church. Beginning with Advent, four Sundays prior to Christmas, and observed with all the various "feast days" culminating with the Feast of Epiphany on January 6th, Christmastide can be enjoyed throughout thirty-seven to forty days! Even those who do not choose to observe the religious significance of the Christmas season take special delight in making the yuletide season a time of celebrating home and family. Herein, I have recorded some of our family's favorite activities and observances.

STIR-UP SUNDAY

On Stir-up Sunday, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, our Christmas "plum" pudding is made (recipe on page 27). The family gathers around to take a turn stirring while a silver coin is dropped into the batter on which to make a wish. The pudding is steamed and set aside in a cool place to age until Christmas day.

ADVENT

Advent is a time of preparing the heart for the coming of Christmas through penance, prayer and fasting. It offers a time for the family to pause and remember the significance of Christmas. Four candles, arranged in a special wreath on the table, are successively lit on each of the four Sundays in Advent.



A MERRY WINTER EVENING.

POPPING CORN

One delightful evening activity for families is popping corn over the fire for both eating and stringing into garlands with which to decorate the Christmas tree. Those evenings are perfect for chatting together over cups of hot chocolate.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The Twelve Days of Christmas: Officially the twelve days of Christmas are ushered in on Christmas Eve when Father brings in the Yule log, the largest log in the woodpile, in preparation for lighting on Christmas the next day. With ceremony it is kindled by a piece of the previous year's Yule log, saved as a symbol of continuing warmth and safety. The log is lit (and put out again before retiring) each evening of the following 12 days through January 5th.



BOXING DAY

December 26th is known as the Feast of St. Stephen and is celebrated in England as an official holiday, Boxing Day. In old England alms boxes for the poor were distributed and boxes of food and gifts were given to servants from their employers. It is a wonderful day to pause again to remember those less fortunate.

CAROLING

When the weather permits, caroling is a wonderful family Christmastide outing. A bit of forethought is required. Mother must put some potatoes on to bake in the afternoon beforehand to place in pockets for keeping fingers warm. Bags of sand are also heated to place in the sleigh for warming feet. Even though caroling requires a bit of preparation, it is most worthwhile. When one and all are snuggled into the sleigh beneath robes and quilts and able to sing in comfort, it makes for a joyous evening for both carolers and those who are gifted with the lilting music. (Note: although caroling by sleigh may be difficult, the joy of the outing can be enhanced by where you take the family. There are many elderly people living alone or in nursing homes that would consider hearing children's voices raised in Christmas cheer to be a wonderful gift.)





ST. NICHOLAS' DAY

Santa Claus is an imaginary fellow. However, his origins are related to the generosity of St. Nicholas, a bishop of the church in Myra in Asia Minor from 350 A.D. He was a noted servant of God in ministering to others in need. December 6th was designated as a day to remember him and prepare our own hearts with generosity for the coming of Christmas. Later, in 12th-century France, a group of nuns decided to give gifts to children on St. Nicholas' Day in his memory – a ritual that soon spread all over Europe. St. Nicholas became known as *Peré Noël* in France, *Father Christmas* in England, and *Sinter Klaas* in Germany. We remember the original meaning of St. Nicholas' Day on December 6th and think of others less fortunate we might help as a family.

ROASTING CHESTNUTS

Father might undertake to roast a few chestnuts. The tops of the chestnuts must be carefully pricked or sliced with a criss-cross cut to keep them from exploding. They are placed at the edge of the open fire to roast. Even then, chestnuts are known to pop as they roast, so the children make a game of it. They each cheer one chestnut as their own, hoping it will be the first to pop!

LITTLE CHRISTMAS

December 28th is our beloved "Little Christmas". On this day we celebrate our children, treasuring and honoring them with festive parties. Our children are truly our best gifts from above.



GAMES

On cold, snowy nights, games can be played around the hearth. Choose from the children's favorite board games such as "Kris Kringle's Visits" and "The Christmas Stocking Game," or work together on picture puzzles with Christmas themes. Equally pleasurable are those games requiring only a bit of imagination. Charades has always been a family favorite.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Remembering the passing of the old year and preparing for the arrival of the new is most definitely a time for celebrating. We recall all the past year's regrets as well as the blessings, recording the blessings in an album for remembrance. Those recalled as regrets or shortcomings are written down on slips of paper and ceremonially burned in the Yule log's fire, freeing us to look forward with a fresh new hope in the year to come.

THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY

Also known as Twelfth Night, on January 6th, Epiphany remembers the arrival of the three Magi bringing their gifts. It is also a final culmination of Christmastide. We save three family gifts on the tree to be opened this last day of Christmas. Then the tree is ceremonially taken down, all the sweetmeats and candies that have decorated it joyfully consumed by the children in a final feast.



DECK THE HALLS

*"Be Merry, be merry all
With holly dress and festive hall
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,
To welcome Merry Christmas!"*



Although the Christmas tree will not be set up and decorated in most homes across the land until Christmas Eve, decking the house early on with fragrant cedar, pine, yew and holly will help get one and all into the yuletide spirit.

Hang a wreath in every front-facing window as well as one on the front door in greeting to those entering the house. Garlands tied with bows always add a festive touch when twined around stair railings and banisters. In our home, no mirror or picture frame is left unadorned without sprays of fragrant cedar or holly! And, most certainly we are careful to add the requisite bunch of mistletoe – often including a sprig in a kissing ball suspended in the front entryway. Of course, we always make certain there are plenty of berries on the mistletoe. Each kiss captured beneath the kissing ball necessitates the removal of one of the berries in keeping with the traditional rhyme:

*"Pluck a berry from the mistletoe
For every kiss that's given.
When the berries are all picked
It brings an end to kissing."*

Instructions for a kissing ball are on page 24



Did you know that mistletoe, in ancient times, was considered to be a mystical plant because it grew without soil and bloomed in winter? Today we know mistletoe is a parasite living off its host plant. There are over 1500 species of mistletoe. They grow primarily in the tropical regions of the world. Broadleaf mistletoe is the species commonly associated with the Christmas tradition. Dwarf mistletoe is the species that grows in the Rocky Mountains. It looks more like moss and causes a deformation on the trees called "witches broom".



THE LEGEND OF CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS



The story is told of the forest and all its creatures gathering to present their gifts at the manger on Christmas Eve. Animals and birds came bearing gifts. Even the trees had gifts on their branches to offer: fruits, nuts, berries and flowers. Only the poor fir tree had nothing to bring, and stood hiding in shame behind the others. The angels singing on high noticed the cowering fir tree and took pity on it. They plucked stars from the sky above and placed them on the little tree's boughs, covering it with shimmering light to celebrate the arrival of the "light of the world."

THE LEGEND OF CHRISTMAS TINSEL

A long time ago, a German mother busily cleaned her house in preparation for Christmas. She was a very poor widow, and although she had no gifts for her children, it was her greatest wish to do something special for them. She had gone into the forest the day before and cut a small tree. There were no decorations to place on its boughs, but still she prepared a place of honor for the little Christmas tree, dusting and sweeping the spot where it would stand.



As the broom swept the floor, several spiders scurried out of the way and into a corner, praying they would not be discovered. Closer and closer the flying broom swept, till the spiders began to fear they would be brushed out the door to perish in the frigid winter air. Crying out in a plaintive chorus they begged the woman to spare their lives.

Softening at their plea, the woman felt pity for the poor creatures. She bade them go to the attic and stay where they would be safe from the cold, while she would be assured that her house was clean.



Christmas Eve arrived and the mother and her children went to bed. The spiders in the attic, wishing for only a glimpse of the tree, crept from their attic-hiding place to take a look. Expecting to behold the glory of a fully decorated tree, they were stunned to see the barren fir tree in the corner. Realization dawned on the spiders: the woman who had spared their lives had no gift to give her children other than the tree itself.

The spiders started to work with a purpose. Crawling over the tree from top to bottom, they spun their silken webs to cover the tree with the gift of the only decoration they could offer.

An angel watching overhead watched the spiders at their toil, and impressed with their charity, touched the tree in blessing. The silken webs immediately turned to silver and gold. Tinsel has ever after been a favored decoration on our trees, and among the most treasured ornaments are the fanciful gold and silver spiders you may glimpse among the branches.





Insects are valuable members of the ecological community. They are the primary pollinators. They are also the primary food source for many birds and other animals. They sometimes cause "disturbances," such as beetle kill trees. When the disturbance is small it creates positive benefits. The dead trees now become home for many species of wildlife including cavity-nesting birds like bluebirds and woodpeckers. They also provide perches for birds of prey like owls and eagles.



VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS HINTS

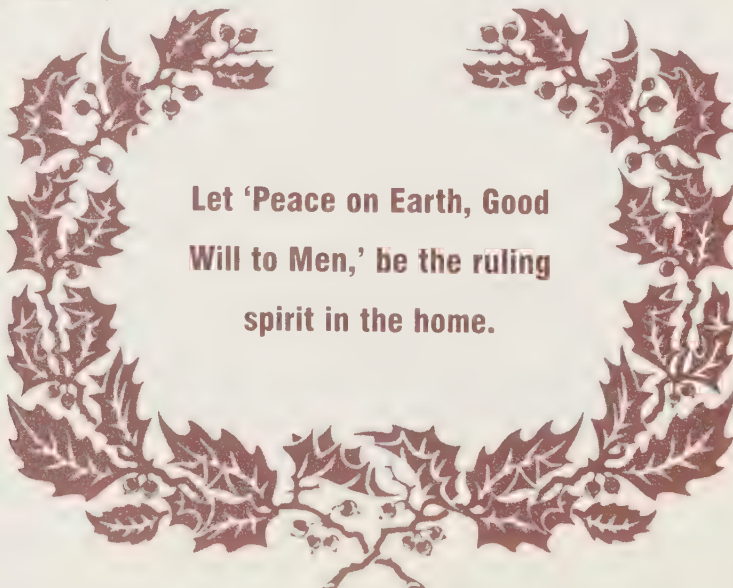


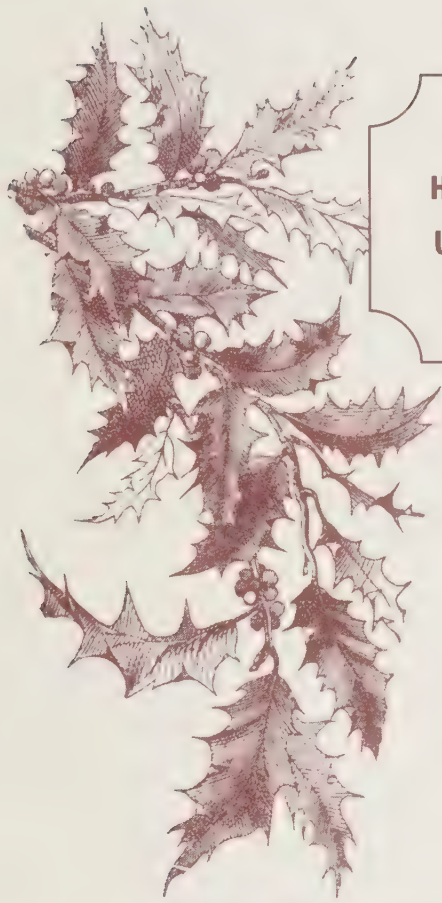
Decorate your homes.

**BEGIN YOUR
CHRISTMAS
PREPARATIONS IN GOOD
SEASON, AND HASTY,
INDIFFERENT
PURCHASES WILL BE
AVOIDED.**



**Let 'Peace on Earth, Good
Will to Men,' be the ruling
spirit in the home.**





**DO NOT FORGET A
HOLLY SPRIG IN TYING
UP YOUR CHRISTMAS
PRESENTS.**

**Prepare your
children for the sweet
and sacred pleasures of
Christmas...Train them to
thoughtfulness and
unselfishness towards
others.**

Teach your
children
application to the
needle, pen and
pencil and you
will put them in
the way of
fashioning many
little Christmas
gifts for the home
circle and friends,
to be prized
above all others
for their individual
character, and the
act of self
sacrifice they
suggest.

**PRESENTS
SHOULD NOT
NECESSARILY BE
USEFUL EVEN TO
THOSE
POSSESSING
FEWER MONETARY
ADVANTAGES
THAN YOURSELF.
RATHER LET IT BE
SOMETHING, THE
FULFILLING OF A
WISH THE PERSON
YOU HAVE IN MIND
LONGED FOR BUT
COULD NOT
GRATIFY.**



**Let love, not obligation,
govern the choice of Christmas
presents for your friends...**

(Select quotes from Christmas in Heart and Home by Elise Trout, 1901)

CRAFTS



KISSING BALL

Materials:

- Three wire coat hangers
- A spool of fine binding wire
- Sphagnum moss
- A selection of different evergreen sprigs
- Mistletoe
- 1 yard of 1 1/2 inch wide satin ribbon
- Wire cutters

Cut off the hooks on two of the hangers just above the twists of wire. Bend the three wire coat hangers into circles, wiring them together at top and bottom with fine wire to make an open ball.

Soak the moss in a bucket of water. Squeeze the water out of small pieces of the moss as you work with it, shaping it around the wire circles and binding it on with fine wire.

Snip small sprays of evergreen and bind them to the wire frame, starting at the bottom of each wire section and working up so that the sprays above cover the wiring of the sprays beneath. Continue until the frame is completely covered with evergreen. Wire the spray of mistletoe up in the center top and to the very bottom of the kissing ball.

Cut the length of ribbon in half and tie one into a bow at the top of the kissing ball and the other onto the bottom of the kissing ball above the mistletoe.

Suspend in the entryway or a doorway and wait for kisses!



PAPER CORNUCOPIA

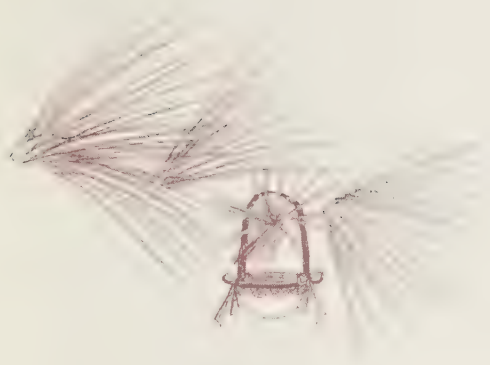
Materials:

- Colored paper or Christmas gift wrap
- Silver and gold wrapping paper
- Pretty stickers
- Ribbons, cording, fringe, lace and tassels
- Scissors, a compass, and glue

Draw a 10-inch diameter circle on a piece of colored paper or gift-wrap with a compass and cut it out. Cut the circle into 4 quarters. Repeat with a piece of silver or gold wrapping paper.

Glue the silver or gold paper and the fancy colored paper wrong sides together, matching the cut openings. Shape into a cone, overlapping the cut edges, and glue in place. Make a small ribbon or cord handle for the top of the cornucopia and affix with glue. Trim the cornucopia around the top with lace, ribbon or fringe, and add a tassel or fringe at the bottom, securing all with glue. Add a pretty sticker, fill with candies or sugarplums and hang on the tree!

EGGSHELL BASKET



Materials:

- Large clean eggs (one egg will make two baskets)
- Pan of water and stove on which to cook the eggs
- A dinner knife and spoon
- A pair of embroidery or manicure scissors and a pair of regular scissors
- Trimmings such as lace, braided gimp, ribbons and tassels
- Glue

Begin by placing the eggs in the pan and covering with water. Set on the stove and heat to a boil, cooking for three minutes only. Drain off the water and allow cooling for two or three minutes.

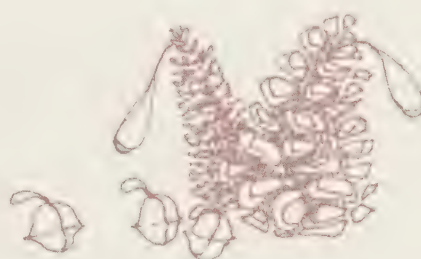
Lay an egg on its side and lightly tap across it at center with a table knife. Start at the crack you have just created and, using the embroidery or manicure scissors, slowly cut around the eggshell to cut it in half. Slice through the interior of the egg with the table knife and pull apart the egg. With the spoon, carefully scoop out the insides of the egg from both halves of the shell. If any egg remains, rinse carefully under running water. Then allow the eggshells to dry thoroughly.

Glue a small length of cording or ribbon to the eggshell basket to form a handle. Then let your creativity flow in adding trim. Choose from braid, ribbon or lace and glue a length of your favorite around the top edge of the basket. Select tassels or make tiny ribbon bows to glue to each side of the handle. Fill the basket with candies, sugarplums, or leave empty and suspend from branches on the Christmas tree.

GILDED NUT AND PINECONE

Materials:

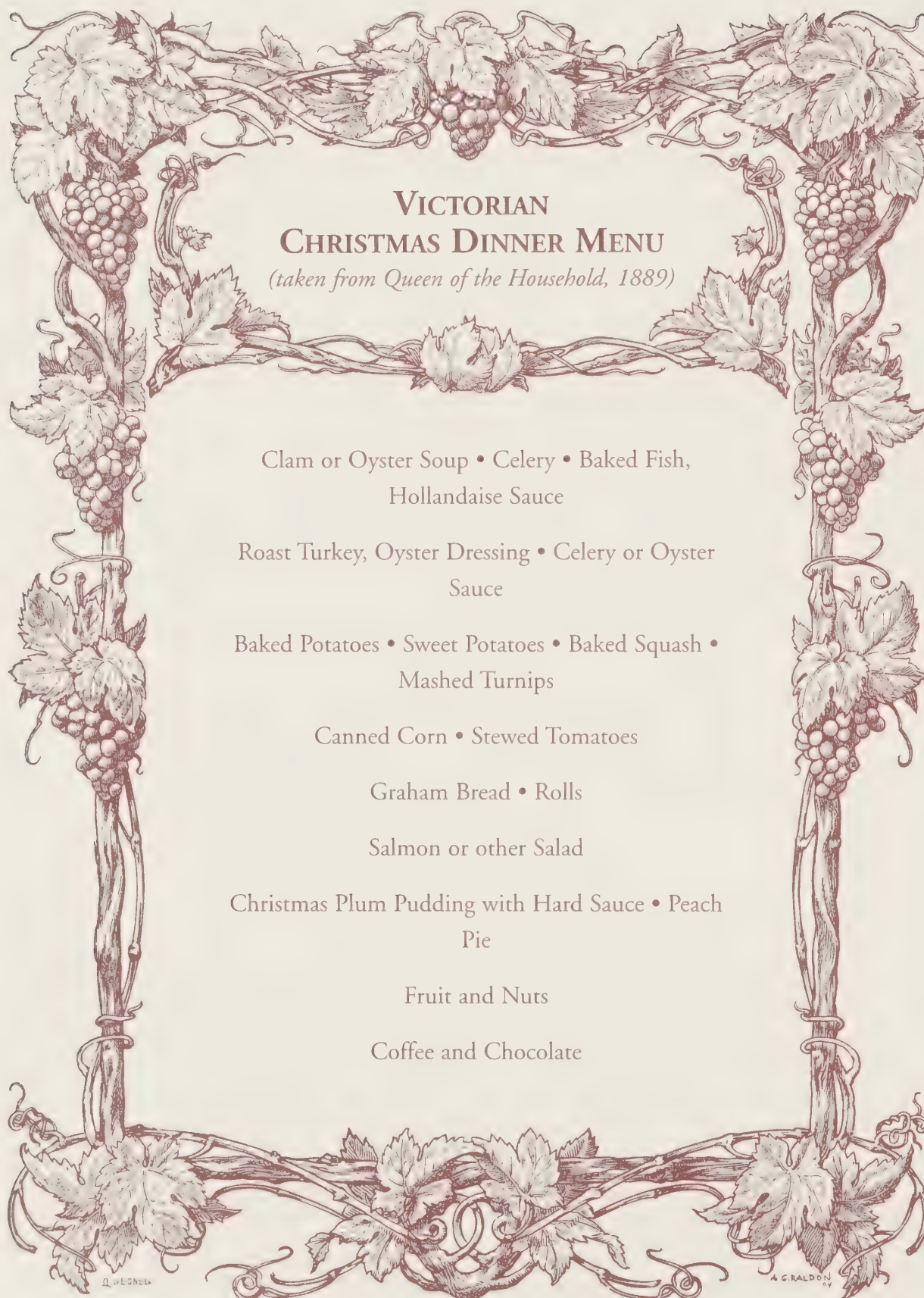
- Nuts and/or pinecones
- Gold and Silver paints
- Paint brush and appropriate cleaning solvent
- 1/4 inch wide satin ribbons in lengths for tying bows and creating loops for hanging
- Glue



Carefully paint the nuts and/or pinecones using the paintbrush and paints. To avoid paint-covered fingers, paint only half of a nut or pinecone at a time, allowing for drying before painting the remaining side.

Cut a length of ribbon that will both tie around the nut or pinecone as well as providing you with enough for tying again into a loop for hanging. Tie the ribbon around the nut or pinecone, adding a bit of glue to help secure the ribbon and keep it from slipping. Tie the remainder into a loop at the top. If you wish, you may also cut a second length of ribbon and tie into a small bow to affix to the top or bottom of the nut or pinecone with a bit of glue for added decoration.

RECEIPTS *(what we would call "recipes")*





GREAT-GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S CHRISTMAS PLUM PUDDING RECIPT

(from Queen of the Household, 1889)

"Shred finely $\frac{3}{4}$ pound beef suet, and add to it a pinch of salt, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds bread crumbs, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ pound raisins, $\frac{3}{4}$ pound currants, picked and dried, 2 ounces candied lemon and citron together, and $\frac{1}{2}$ large nutmeg, ground; mix these thoroughly, then add 4 eggs and milk enough to moisten it, but not too much or the pudding will be heavy; tie in a pudding-cloth, well floured, and boil for 5-6 hours; or, we think better when boiled in a mold, which should be well buttered before the mixture is put in. The mold should not be quite full, and should be covered with 1 or 2 folds of paper, buttered and floured, and then with a floured pudding-cloth."

Remember:

Mix up the Christmas Pudding on Stir-up Sunday. Drop a silver coin into the batter to wish upon. Gather the family to take turns stirring while making their wishes. Steam the pudding as directed, then set it aside in a cool place until Christmas Day. Steam again for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to heat and turn out onto a pretty platter. Garnish with a sprig of holly. Tradition calls for a bit of brandy to be poured over the pudding, which is then lit afire so as to give the beloved dessert a grand entrance! Whoever finds the silver coin in his or her slice will have their wish granted.



GREAT-GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S HARD SAUCE RECIPT

(for topping the Christmas Pudding, From Queen of the Household, 1889)

"One large cup powdered sugar whipped to a cream with 2 tablespoons butter, 1 of currant jelly, beaten in with as much cinnamon as will lie on a half-dime; when mixed heap on a saucer or glass dish, and set in a cold place to harden."

GREAT-GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S GINGER COOKIE RECIPT

"One cup sugar, 1 cup molasses, 1 cup shortening, 2 beaten eggs, 1 teaspoon soda dissolved in 4 tablespoons buttermilk, 1 tablespoon ginger. Stir in enough flour with a spoon to make dough stiff enough to mold with the hand. Roll the dough, cut into shapes, and bake in a quick oven."

(from Queen of the Household, 1889)

[Note: before the invention of oven temperature gauges, the only way to ascertain the proper heat for baking was by opening the oven door and holding your hand inside. If you could only stand to hold it in for a few seconds, it was considered a "quick" oven (because you needed to get your hand out quick) and would be the equivalent of a 400-425 degree oven today].



SUGARPLUMS

Create the sweet morsels that filled the dreams of the children in Clement C. Moore's beloved poem, "The Night Before Christmas." Sugarplums are just a mixture of a variety of chopped dried fruits, nuts, powdered sugar and a preservative: brandy. Mix together one pound each of finely chopped figs, pitted dates, apricots, nut meats, a couple tablespoons of brandy and enough powdered sugar to permit rolling into bite-sized balls. Roll in a bit more powdered sugar and enjoy!



MOLASSES CANDY

Pulling candy is a wonderful family activity enjoyed during Christmastide. Molasses Candy is an old-fashioned favorite!

2 cups molasses
2 cups brown sugar
1/3 cup vinegar
1 cup water
2 Tablespoons butter
Dash of salt

Boil ingredients until brittle when tried in cold water. Pour into a hot buttered pan; butter your hands and pull candy when cool enough to handle; cut into bite-sized pieces and wrap in waxed paper.

(adapted from Queen of the Household, 1889)

The material on the Victorian era, including vintage quotations, instructions and recipes were provided by writer and dramatic artist, Judi Brandow, the creator of *Visits With a Victorian Lady*®. Judi offers a free, monthly, e-mailed newsletter filled with heirloom quotations on her website at www.victorianvisits.com. Nothing in this booklet is intended as an endorsement by the government of the services and products offered by Judy Brandow.

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This booklet is part of a series of booklets that provide historical and cultural information on various Christmas traditions. The material presented in this booklet provides historical instruction about religious traditions and does not promote a particular religion.

We would like to hear from you regarding this booklet and the Christmas tree recreation fee demonstration program. Please contact us or fill out a customer service comment card.

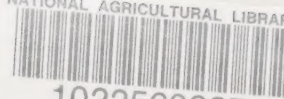


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